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Italy-Mediterranean: Rome does not favor a Mediterranean Pact.

Roberto Ducci, director general for political affairs in the Italian Foreign Ministry, told a US Embassy officer last week that Rome saw little advantage in a tripartite pact with Paris and Madrid and, in any case, would find this type of association with the Franco government politically unacceptable. He said that neither the Spanish nor the French have approached Rome on the subject.

A pact including the three European countries plus certain Maghreb countries--Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and possibly even Libya--would be equally objectionable, according to Ducci, because it would mark a clear division between Eastern and Western Mediterranean. Earlier, Ducci's deputy had termed this idea "disastrous." Italy does not believe that it is in the Western interest to paint the Eastern Mediterranean as "lost" to the Soviets. Rome believes, moreover, that Algeria should not be confronted with a choice of alignment.

The idea of a Mediterranean agreement with France as the predominant member, which goes back to the early years of De Gaulle's presidency, has re-emerged during the past few months. Paris and Madrid have been actively discussing some undefined form of Mediterranean cooperation, but both have been vague about the kind of arrangement they have in mind.

Italy, which continues to view Mediterranean security in a NATO context, would not find such a plan attractive. It would likewise not be interested in a revival of the idea advanced in 1968 by then Spanish Foreign Minister Castiella for a mutual withdrawal of US and Soviet fleets from the Mediterranean.

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